

CHARIVARIA

WATCHFUL eyes on the suitability of Royal publicity must have overlooked the annual report of the Council of King's College, Cambridge, with its cricket note that "the game against New College had to be cancelled as the Duke of Edinburgh's helicopter was landing on the ground that day." This seems no way to further the interests of the National Playing Fields Association.

Slice of Luck

ONE bit of good blown by the ill wind of the Budget-leak fuss may be the death



of that "national cake" image on the Government benches. It would be too easy for the Opposition to start chanting "Eccles!"

Panic Over

It is hard to guess whether ardent Shakespeareans or ardent followers of TV family serials were worst shaken by that headline "It's THE OLD VIC GROVES!" But sighs of relief were heaved in both camps when the story only started off with "Vic Groves Sat in the Arsenal dressing-room . . ."

The Gold and the Red

SELDOM have the headlines been so richly studded with show business incomes, as bandleaders top their £50,000 a year, ex-barrow-boy singers their £600 a week, and TV comedians are in a dilemma whether to buy their parents an annuity or send their daughters to Swiss finishing schools. Those in the know point out that these popular heroes of the moment must

cash in while they can; they may be forgotten in a year; and the next time their names are associated with huge headline figures will be on the occasion of that inevitable lawsuit by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue.

No Agents

MANY people sympathetic to the proposed doctors' strike had second thoughts on reading of a threatened down-tools by members of the National Union of Funeral and Cemetery Workers. It occurred to them that they could probably manage without the middle-men anyway.

Echo

THOUGH residents in the Outer Hebrides were not assured in so many words that they could "rely on all friends of justice" in the matter of having to entertain a guided missile range, there was a promise of a public inquiry four years ago, which now



seems to have taken the form of firm plans to build the range. The whole affair is said to be attracting considerable interest in Israel.

Silver Lining

AWARDING sixty pounds damages to a Central Electricity Authority employee who had lost his teeth in an accident, the judge, according to an *Evening News* report, "said that he had taken into consideration that the man would be free from toothache." The plaintiff is understood to have expressed his relief that the accident was not more

serious, involving, say, permanent immunity from pains in the head.

You Scratch My Back

PUBLICITY men associated with the film *Anastasia* have received wholehearted support from the Beaverbrook press, which has described it, as the publicity men advertise (in the Beaverbrook press) as "the film everyone is



talking about . . . from the world's headlines comes a great . . . unforgettable film . . . exciting, amusing—very moving . . . the critics are raving about it." Moreover, it is being serialized (in the Beaverbrook press).

Let the People Hum

WHAT with the *Daily Express* printing the words and music of "Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud," and the *Daily Telegraph* doing the same for "Ghana, Arise! An Independent Nation," it is expected that more and more newspapers will be getting themselves played on the nation's pianos as the vogue catches on. Wise editors will naturally try to exploit the idea in a way that is "different," so that when it comes to the *Daily Worker's* turn we may expect the tune of the moment in tonic sol-fa—after which it will be only a step to a ukulele accompaniment written into Lord Hailsham's popular verses in *The Spectator*.

For Pulping

THE name of Basil Collier is printed here so that readers may study it. It may be their last chance. His book "The Defence of the United Kingdom," published last week by the Stationery

Office in the official *History of the Second World War* series, deals with our successful conquest of the flying bombs, the common sense of Air Chief Marshal Dowding, the inefficiency of German engineering and the level-headedness of Air Marshal Sir Roderic Hill. Mr. Collier, in writing this sort of stuff, has signed his passport to obscurity. What hope of full-page reviews, Sunday serialization and peak discussion spots on radio and TV has a book that neither exposes bungling among the field-marshal nor shows that Churchill was a fool?

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

THAT lady panelists who are also lady columnists have a distinct advantage over their fellow celebrities was demonstrated when Miss Drusilla Beyfus told readers that the televised Pat Kirkwood was "a dun coloured face..." that Sybil Connolly hit the screen as a "shapeless stretch of dense black," and that Lady Barnett looked like "an Eskimo peering out of a snow-hole": then added four posed photographs of herself under the heading "One of Britain's Prettiest Panel Stars..."

Second Best Bet

"This is indeed a great victory for Labour."
Unsuccessful Labour candidate at Warwick

FOR once the Opposition needn't bleat
When the new Tory Member takes his
seat.

'Twill be enough to shake their heads
and say

"You should have seen the one that got
away."



MAO TSE-TUNG, HE SAY—

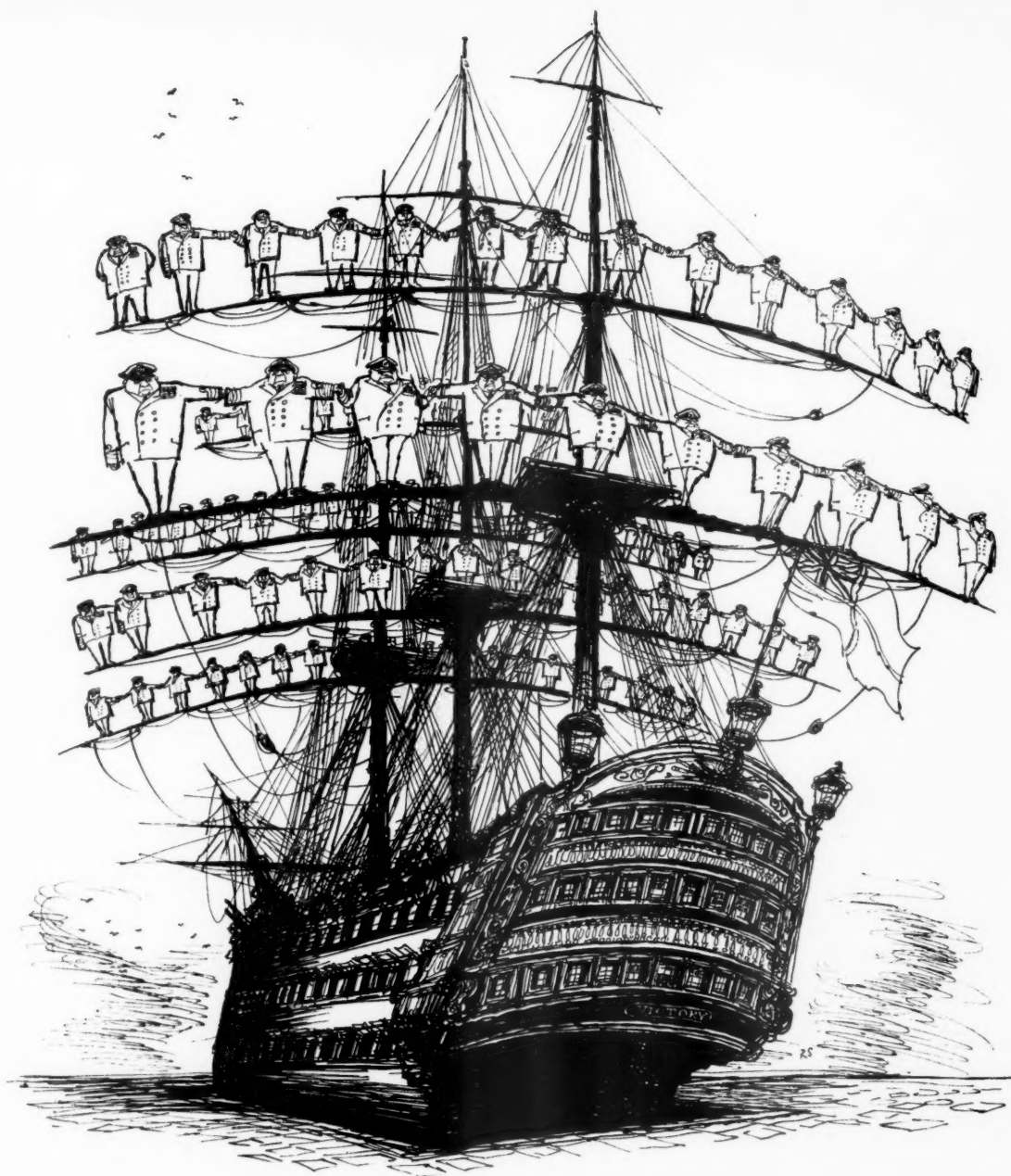
(This month's "Labour Monthly" prints two poems by Mao Tse-tung. Their publication throws light on the possible authorship of the following lines, which are remarkably similar in style but have hitherto been attributed to Lord Hailsham.)

EDUCATION

I LOOK across the broad fields of Ching Ha Farm
where the counter-revolutionaries are being reclaimed,
digging from the brown earth a canal twenty li long
wherein there will flow the cool emerald water
that will irrigate fifty thousand mows of land
and supply electricity; then looking
at the brick kilns reeking in the strong sunlight,
the fragrant laboratory, the rice-flour mill,
and the factory for straw bags; seeing
around me all manner of criminal elements
who once openly refused to work and
committed unethical acts of sabotage,
now through vigorous participation in labour, knowing
the benison of democratic thought-education, feeling
a sharp change in their minds, now wanting
to confess to their crimes and to reform themselves.

and later I think how after many centuries
in which the government of the people
was carried on through statutes dry
as the dry grasses of Changsha, and acts of parliament
merciless as is the talon of the kite,
a new age is about to start in the west
where the education of the toiling masses will
no more be effected by means of laws and statutes
but through verses written by government officials
and published at the foot of splendid columns
for the delight of readers of the weekly papers;
and then I wonder
if, having taken this step in the direction of
eastern wisdom, the peoples of the west
may not follow a little further along the path
and direct the steps of those who walk
along unethical paths and in counter-revolutionary directions
by means of comprehensive establishments
like the great farm of Ching Ha where the sad men
who do not agree with the government of red China
are taught the contrast between punishment and reward
and in extreme cases rendered ineffective with
the unforgiving rifle; but then I reflect
how many years ago the terrible dragon Churchill
spoke in verses to the dragon Roosevelt, saying
"no more let us palter, from Malta to Yalta, let nobody alter,"
and yet thereafter
the heart of the west remained unchanged; and I think
that enlightenment and the ability to compose elegant verses
are not necessarily always found together.

(Trans. B. A. Y.)



ADMIRALS ALL

Bingley and Watson, Lambe and Reid
 Honour be yours and fame,
 And honour, as prince of the bulldog breed,
 Mountbatten's peerful name.
 There used to be fifteen ships afloat
 And now there are only four.
 For under the recent Naval Vote
 All sailors must serve ashore.

Admirals all, they say their say
 (In minutes of monstrous length),
 Admirals all, they draw their pay
 And remain on the active strength.
 The ships are scrapped, and the ratings, too,
 Have most of them got demob,
 But Admirals all, as they always do,
 Have managed to keep their job.

Pleasures, Palaces, and So On

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

ADVERTISING punch-lines made abhorrent through commercial television-assail us all over Olympia. There are other announcements of the fashionable blind-you-with-science kind ("the superfine fibre with the no-shrink polymer weld"). And perhaps proprietary nomenclature has become slightly more painful with the years as we avert our gaze from the Redibed, the Comfie, the Easiclene, the Warerite, the Suregrip, the Spunjit, the Sprinkleen, the Supermaid, the Quickfri, the Dishlex, the Teasmade, the Karpoclean, and of course countless attractions with the suffix of the moment—Drainmasters, Fishmasters, Scalpmasters, Mudmasters, Cashmasters... Ballyhoomasters...

But the *Daily Mail's* concept of the ideal home remains blurred. A study

of the visitors, as they moon dazedly past the Pavilion of Beauty or tread their diffident way down the Avenue of Carpets, affords no clue. It is only clear that, in general, they are probably not the ideal people to set up the *Daily Mail's* kind of ideal home. They do not wear ideal hats or boast ideal hair-dos. Their approach is not ideal. "Gill-ern!" they cry, humping their carrier-bags past a stand full of ideal saucepan scourers—"don't you touch or they'll call a policeman!" Or they confide to each other, as they roll in the awkward gait imposed by shoving from all sides: "It's a blessing I 'ad my feet done." Momentarily the exhibition is lent tone by a loud-speaker message, gallantly shouting down the blare of military music: "Will Captain Rawlings, of London, W.1, please proceed to the

Floral Fountain where his wife is waiting." But the Captain is obviously a freak, someone who either got there by mistake or was left over from the opening day's first, and indisputably ideal, visitors.

Under a canopy of crimson and gilt plasterboard, framed by rich curtains, lit by crystal chandeliers and palisaded by exotic bottles, a beautiful girl intones into an ivory microphone. "... many stars apply the lipstick to the lower lip first, spread to the upper, and touch up with a brush afterwards to perfect the line..." A crowd presses close, inelegantly relaxed, pushing its wisps of hair back under its berets, glimpsing the ideal world. A young man with a tapering profile listens impassively, hands deep in the pockets of an unbuttoned raincoat, and presently trudges on and is arrested by an amplified voice from a cookery theatre..."Ease the mixture gently into the right-hand corner of your baking-tin..." He is joined urgently by a girl in a long, grass-green coat with a drooping half-belt. "Where you been?" She grabs his sleeve. "I said meet at the Bon Viveur."

"Free cook-book with every purchase made," says a tired but unmistakably stage-trained voice (actor-demonstrators are almost a tradition here), "forty marvellous recipes." And, from a newspaper stand close by, with inferior elocution: "Plane dives on homes, seventeen die." The faces of nearby pilgrims show no response to either announcement. A middle-aged saleswoman in a beverage-manufacturer's uniform, a pearl-grey, G.I.-type head-dress incongruously angled on the sharp new perm, pounces suddenly on a weeping child. "Are you Shirley? Your mum's looking for you." They disappear in the direction of a bright blue hat and reunion.

The contrast is keen, between the slick, aggressively gay model interiors with their *avant garde* log-boxes and stiff, careful flower arrangements, where watchful men in good suits eternally push their costly suction-cleaners, and the careworn proletariat shuffling through its annual feast of dreams. There is contrast, too, between the prodigal splendour of the show and the tired-eyed distracted representatives of



"I've had second thoughts, Mrs. Bullocke—one of them might turn out to be a future Prime Minister."



"It ought to be double tax for some."

the organizers, who sit in the Press room in a litter of hand-outs and string. It is hard to get their attention. They are absorbed in organizational matters. "I thought you said Jack was fixing it," says one, scrabbling through cyclo-styled foolscap. "He was going to speak to Arthur," says the other assertively. "Couldn't do no more, could I?" The first man passes a hand wearily through his hair. "You've let me down," he says, "that's what you've done"; and, catching sight of the waiting visitor, with more than a touch of challenge: "Yes?"

As someone-or-other said, it's delightful to walk past the Bond Street windows and think of all the things you don't want. And for the even mildly discriminating, Olympia offers the same pleasurable experience. Possibly the exhibit on the P.D.S.A. stand, showing an X-ray photograph of a dessert spoon in a dog's stomach, is not a fair example; nor are the elaborately polished and carpeted temporary premises of the leading joint stock banks, all quite empty but for the staff (who have now lost the taut excitement of being posted for special duties and are sagging at each other over the counters, telling

jokes). But these glittering halls are rich in articles which, without breaking the discerning heart, could be allowed to stay permanently where they are. How many homes could only become ideal with the acquisition of this painting-by-numbers outfit, which enables the quite unskilled artist to murder "The Laughing Cavalier" and other classics? Or this handsome "Holy Family Edition of the Approved Catholic Bible"? Will our domestic life collapse without these small mats hand-made by members of the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds "in a stitch learned from women prisoners in a Spanish gaol"? There is, certainly, an attractively economical air about a proprietary brand of lemon-juice recommended for preserving apples, reducing fever, freshening face-cloths, relieving travel-sickness, dressing salads, flavouring milk, retarding tainting in meat, shampooing the hair and beautifying the face, hands and elbows . . . but a home, one suspects, might possibly be ideal without it.

No, it seems obvious that next year the *Daily Mail* will have to show us the ideal family. Then we shall know not only what sort of homes we're supposed

to have but what sort of people we're supposed to be. Our cup of envy will be full as we press close to the jaunty sitting-room, with its cone-shaped, rough stone corner fireplace and mock-Tudor fire-basket glowing with imitation coals, and see the family sitting in its Telemaster chairs, gazing at Mrs. Cradock, listening to the bubble of the washing-machine and the singing of the automatic tea-making set, neat in their crease-resisting viewing jackets and Teleslacks in adjustable snap-fastening Wonderthene. Then at last we shall know. And the thoughts of some of us, at any rate, will turn perversely to a man we met who lived on a hew-it-yourself rock plateau half-way up the cliff-face to the village of Eze, in the Alpes Maritimes, and proclaimed himself ideally happy serving a very occasional drink to passing climbers and listening to a couple of private nightingales.

2 2

"Male Clerk required; interesting position for a young lady with initiative.—Write P.6542, News Office, Aldershot."
Camberley News

Have to be adaptable, too.

"You Want the Best Peaks . . ."

By H. F. ELLIS

ONE of the most modest tariffs ever issued. Such is probably the off-the-cuff reaction of the man in the street to the recent memorandum from the Nepalese Foreign Office setting out the fees for climbing peaks in those parts. Everest, Kangchenjunga, Annapurna and one or two more come out at about £225 per peak per expedition, and that is less than twopence a foot, if you reckon in elevation above M.S.L., which is the way the Nepalese Government goes to work. For peaks below 26,000 and above 25,000 (of which Nepal has something over forty) there is a worthwhile drop to £150—Kamet and Nanda Devi are obvious bargains in this group, or would be if they were in Nepal—and under 25,000 feet you can get your scramble for as little as £75. This certainly seems very reasonable when you compare it with 6d. for the Monument (only 120 feet) and one shilling for the Whispering Gallery (under 100).

The Nepalese Foreign Office also announce that compensation will be required for the deaths of native liaison officers and porters at a rate of about £375 a head for the former and £225 for the latter. Here the Westerner finds comparison more difficult, rates for vergers, etc., lost during London ascents not being readily available.

Still, the figures seem at first sight not out of the way. Unless the liaison officer makes himself absolutely unbearable, an expedition ought to be able to count on keeping well on the right side of four figures.

So much for the superficial view. There are, however, further considerations not to be overlooked by anyone planning a climb in Nepal. No expedition to the Himalayas ever yet contented itself with climbing just the one peak it set out to climb. All my reading of mountaineering literature goes to prove this contention. The difficulty is partly physical; you sometimes have to climb over a number of intervening peaks to get to the one you want; partly due to the need for reconnaissance: and partly due to the uncontrollable weakness of mountaineers for running up any peaks that happen to be handy. Glancing almost at random into a book called *The Ultimate Mountains*, by Thomas Weir, I find: "Scott and McKinnon made off to climb a 16,000 foot peak for a view"—"... the 19,930 foot peak of Hanuman had taken Scott and McKinnon's fancy"—"Given a sufficiently early start it might be possible to climb a 16,600 foot peak in time for a view. Scott and McKinnon were all for the idea." Or take this, from Eric Shipton's *Nanda Devi*: "We

had intended to attempt on the following day the ascent of an attractive peak of some 21,500 feet above our camp. Tilman's foot, however, appeared to be getting worse..." These expeditions, as it happens, were in Almora and Garwhal, but the extracts show clearly enough the fearsome risks that will be run by future expeditions to Nepal—where the Government is scarcely likely to make reductions for subsidiary peaks simply on the ground that they were run up and down before breakfast. To take Scott and McKinnon on such a party might well spell ruin.

One has an uneasy feeling that future dispatches to *The Times* are going to be marred by an unpleasantly sordid note. Certainly they will be, if the following specimen, just received from Khatmandu, is any guide. (Any misspellings, geographical displacements of mountains, etc., are due to faulty transmission.)

DISQUIETING NEWS FROM THE HIMALAYAS

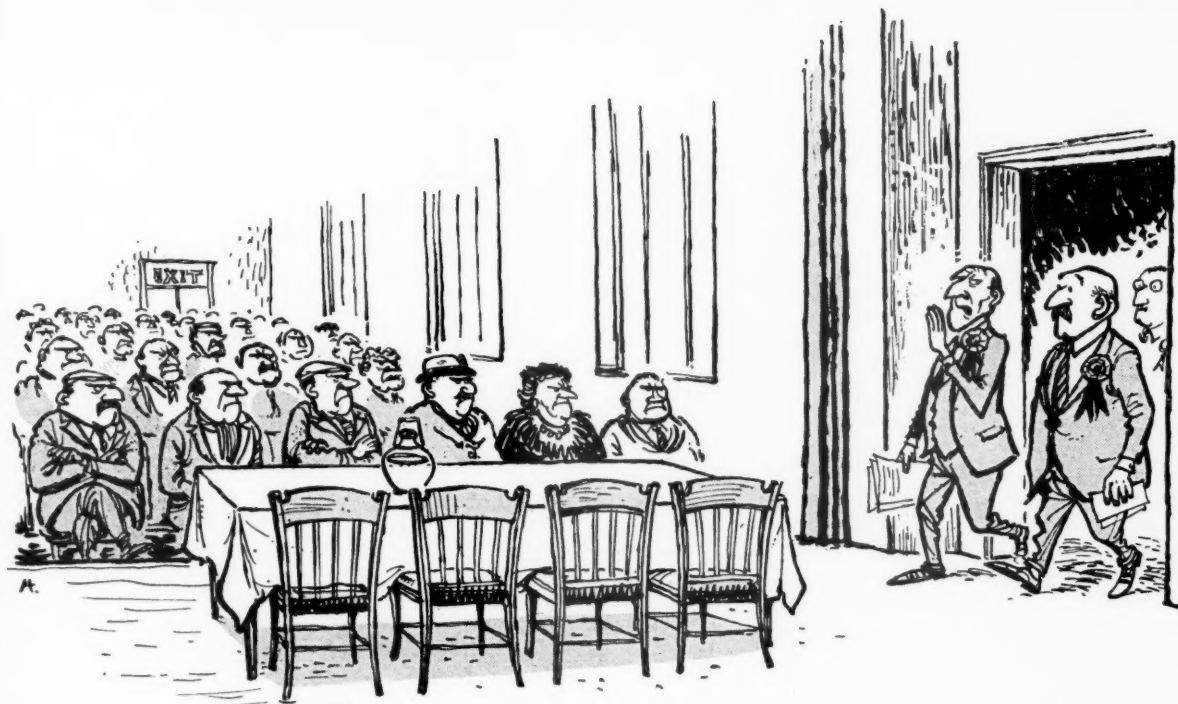
SERIOUS CHARGES

*From our Correspondent with the
Annapurna Expedition*

Monday. Our attempt to reach the Sumal Basin by way of Kurashi has failed. After an easy slog up the treacherous slopes of the Malari, Wilson, who was leading, rounded an awkward *arête* to find further progress barred by the towering peak of Tara Bhot, which rises to the inaccessible sum of £150. Saunderson was for going on, but Wilson and Rice pointed out that, after the sad loss of Rusang (who gallantly refused to let go of his load when it slipped off the Dhura Ridge last Wednesday), we must conserve our resources. Sadly we retraced our steps to Jok. The plan is now to attempt to force a passage up the Knubli Gorge, keeping well below the £100 line, and avoid the ruinous Badrinath peaks by means of the Gorotri glacier.

Tuesday. A most unfortunate incident has jeopardized the success of the whole expedition. While Rice and Saunderson were out on a preliminary reconnaissance of the Knubli, Cheeseman, who had been left behind in camp to rest his gangrened leg, absently-mindedly went for a stroll up the nearby Chunga, and bang went another £75. All would have been well had he not been spotted on the peak by our ubiquitous liaison officer, Billerikay. Cheeseman is broken-hearted. He





"Pity these by-elections coincide with the egg glut."

became delirious during the night and spoke of selling his Premium Bonds.

Wednesday. Cheeseman is much better this morning. But our difficulties are by no means over. The liaison officer insists on accompanying us at least as far as Ghong, which means constantly belying and unbelying him at every step. He is far too valuable to risk. Moreover a tax collector suddenly appeared soon after our start up the Knubli Gorge and charged us £5 merely for walking over a small 14,000 foot knoll that none of us noticed. These men are now so numerous and difficult to avoid that Saunderson is planning to send Wilson and Rice on a decoy march to the north-east, as though about to attempt the Bundar Thal (£225), in order to draw them off, while he, Cheeseman and your correspondent make a dash for Annapurna.

Thursday. Much unrest among the Sherpas. The headman, Nilgri, announced this morning that he will throw himself over the next precipice unless we increase their wages. This is the dreaded Porter's Fork, fast becoming the scourge of Nepalese mountaineering. We can afford neither to lose Nilgri (£225) nor

to pay more wages all round. It seems monstrous that a porter should be priced as highly as Everest.

Friday. Little hope now remains. We are in the grip of an economic blizzard, and have not the resources to go a pound further. On every side 25,000-foot peaks hem us in, Billerikay is down with Himalayan dropsy and has £375 written all over him, the tax collectors are closing in, their eyes shining with a ghostly radiance in the moonlight. Annapurna, white goddess of the central massif, must remain inviolate. Her shimmering summit, so near, and yet so damned expensive, etc., etc.

Saturday. Wilson has gone off his head with worry and disappointment, and ascended eleven peaks, all of them over £150, before we could catch and disable him. Only a cheque can save us now . . .

Gleam

"To-morrow the Cabinet will begin a study of the proposals from two angels."

Yorkshire Evening Press

Louder Still and Louder

Afghanistan has bought from Britain enough musical instruments to equip thirty Army brass bands.

WHEN Roberts marched to
Kandahar,
Foot-slogging from Kabul,
The heathen Afghan, near and far,
Bowed to the British rule.

And still across the Khyber Pass
The western breezes hum
With distant blare of British brass
And boom of British drum.

The Afghan buys his tools of war
Within the Russian zone
But still relies on Britain for
His tuba and trombone.

For though his trust in iron shards
Of British make may waver
Our reeking tubes he still regards
With undiminished favour.

E. V. MILNER

Candidus Comes to Town

By LORD KINROSS

A STRANGER has arrived on my doorstep. His name is Candidus Smith, and he comes from a faraway country beyond the Ocean. Fresh from some college, with one of those shorn heads and open, still unmapped, faces characteristic of the youth of new worlds, he proffered me a frank and friendly handshake. I invited him in, saying "Welcome, stranger, to the best of all possible worlds."

Candidus shivered a little as he discarded his overcoat. "This is indeed a pleasure," he smiled. "At first your world seems rather a damp one, and a dark one, and a small one, and a silent one. But I don't doubt that what you say of it will prove to be true."

A coal fire was burning in my grate, helping to heat the chimney, and pouring out of it wreaths of smoke, which mingled with the low cloud and the fog from the river to cast a comfortable shroud over the city. Through the muted streets crawled large red buses and small black cars, stopping deferentially at crossings for the muffled pedestrians. Candidus gazed out of the

window at this unfamiliar scene with an expression of slow surprise.

Unfortunately, owing to the choking of the boiler with coke-dust, the water was not hot enough for my guest to take a bath and thus to thaw out his bones and wash off the grime of his journey by steam-train from the coast. Nor was a shower available. But he cleaned himself as best he could and emerged from his room all fresh and eager for what I might show him. As it chanced, I had been invited that evening to a party, and I decided to take Candidus with me, thus introducing him, at an early stage, into the best of all possible societies. Down streets flooded lividly with monochrome lighting, streets which seemed to him narrow between buildings which seemed to him low, we drove slowly in a taxi towards Chelsea.

"Chelsea!" he exclaimed, when I told him of our destination. "Where I come from we have heard of Chelsea. It is your great centre of the arts, the haunt of your painters and sculptors and their profligate models. They live an unbridled *Vie de Bohème*, do they not, flinging conventions and morals to

the winds?" As we turned into the King's Road he continued excitedly, "Look! That painter in corduroys, with a beard, that girl with him in skin-tight slacks, with her hair in a pony-tail! She must be his mistress. Doubtless a ballet dancer."

I shook my head, happening to recognize the couple. "No, he is a man who runs a Café Espresso. That is his wife. Her father is a Master of Foxhounds." British artists, I explained, were for the most part modest country gentlemen, living in East Anglia and such places.

Before Candidus could express his disappointment we drew up at the door, painted turquoise blue, of a Lilliputian house, painted white.

"This is where Lady Anne lives," I said.

"The Lady Anne? She is an aristocrat living in Bohemia?"

"Well, I suppose you could put it that way."

"But there is no one at home. There is no light in the windows."

I indicated the fanlight. But the street did indeed look asleep, all discreet behind its rows of drawn curtains.

"The great apartments in which we live," said Candidus, "are always ablaze with lights, shining down on the world."

"Here you will find," I explained to him, "that the inner life prevails"; and at that moment Lady Anne opened the door to us.

"Darling," she said. "Lovely to see you, and Mr. Smith too. Put your coats down anywhere and come up. You know everybody. This is Mr. Candidus Smith, everybody. Alec'll give you a drink. There's the doorbell again." And she was gone.

Alec came up with a jug. "Here you are," he said. And he too was gone.

"He is a lord?" Candidus asked.

"No. He is a publisher."

"But as the husband of a lady he is necessarily a gentleman?"

"Not necessarily."

Bewildered, Candidus surveyed the room, where some twenty-five people were conversing and drinking.

"Should I go round and give everybody a polite greeting and say my name?"

"On no account. That would be



thought gauche. Manners here, you will discover, are the exact reverse of those beyond the ocean. Here the proletariat is polite: the ruling classes are not."

So Candidus stood and sipped his drink. He remarked that it was not much iced. I explained that the British prefer their drink strong. Ice merely dilutes it, they think. I drew his attention to the room. It had a Regency wallpaper, an ormolu couch, mirrors surmounted by eagles, table supported by lyres. The curtains were draped, with swags and pompons, rather in an early Victorian manner.

"It is easy to see," remarked Candidus, "that this is an ancestral home, small as it is. All these furnishings breathe the atmosphere of past generations."

"Yes. They were supplied by that young man over there, talking to the wife of an ex-Prime Minister. He is an interior decorator."

"Which one? They are all dressed the same. And all in black too. Some member of the Royal Family has died?"

The guests, it is true, were discreet in their appearance. The women wore, for the most part, black cocktail dresses, or neat black tailor-mades, with a string of pearls or so, and a clip or a bracelet here and there. The men wore neat dark suits, pin-head or pin-stripe, navy or charcoal. It was the British fashion, I explained, to look thus unobtrusive.

"Then this is a fashionable party?"

"In a way."

"But that guest over there, she is not fashionable."

She wore a stockinette dress which bulged a little, and her hair fell in wisps from beneath the undulating brim of her hat.

"She is a countess," I explained.

"She is our hostess's mother."

Candidus looked doubtfully at the countess. "That gentleman talking to her, he at least is fashionable, with his well-brushed greying hair and his neat collar and tie and his nicely-cut clothes. An ambassador perhaps, or indeed a lord?"

"He is a dress-designer."

"Show me a lord, then."

"That man over there, talking with much animation. He is a Labour lord. A very rich one."

Candidus furrowed his brows. "In my country," he said, "Society, like



"Comment!—du vin rouge avec le poisson?"

other things, is organized in an orderly fashion. There is a world of politicians and one of diplomatists and one of business men and one of actors and one of intellectuals. Now, would this be your world of politicians?"

"Not especially. That smart dark woman, with the birds in her hat, talking to the Labour lord, is the wife of a Cabinet Minister in our present Tory government. There are some other wives of M.P.s here, and the husband of our hostess is a Junior Minister. But he is not here. M.P.s seldom go out in Society. They can't get out of the House of Commons without leave, and this is seldom granted."

"Then if these gentlemen are not politicians they are business men?"

"Certainly not. They are mostly critics or cartoonists or choreographers or columnists. During the war most of the M.P.s were fighting, so couldn't go to parties, and most of the writers were writing, so could. So the hostesses got into the habit of inviting them, and got used to them, and after the war, as the thirst for universal education spread to the upper classes, they invited them all the more."

"So this is *La Vie de Bohème*?"

"You had better judge for yourself. Come, I will introduce you."

So Candidus Smith joined the dark-

clad throng, and talked to the Cabinet Minister's wife about ballet, and to the countess about washing-machines, and to a political columnist about the countess's clothes, and to a professor of Moral Philosophy about television, and to the Labour lord about Tiepolo, and to the interior decorator about the Suez crisis, and to a man from the Foreign Office about the habits of cats, until finally I extracted him, in a state of some bewilderment, and led him away to dinner.

"This is indeed a confusing world of yours," he said over his oysters. "The people conform very properly in their costume, as ours do, but in other respects they seem disturbingly different one from another. It is hard to judge from their conversation, or indeed from their appearance, to what category they belong. Nor do they seem to take themselves very seriously."

"They like to talk seriously only on frivolous subjects, and on serious subjects to talk frivolously."

"And on their own subjects?"

"Never."

"This I find wasteful. To one such as I, used to order and conformity, it seems a mixed-up undisciplined world. A little anarchic, is it not?"

"The best," I replied, "of all possible anarchies."

From a Film Critic's Manuscript Book

By PAUL DEHN

"ALL length is torture," said Shakespeare's Antony who had, of course, not seen who had not, of course, seen who of course had not seen the 3½-hour screen-version at the Plaza, Lower Regent Street, of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, by King Vidor who, with the help of five scriptwriters headed by Bridget Boland, who wrote *The Prisoner* headed by author of *The Prisoner*, Bridget Boland, headed by authoress of *The Prisoner*, Bridget Boland, headed by Bridget (*The Prisoner*) Boland who of course had not seen King Vidor's 3½-hour screen-version (in CinemaScope) (in VistaVision and Technicolor) of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Plaza, Lower Regent Street) which, while relieved by a ten-minute intermission on the eve of Borodino

"All length is torture," said Shakespeare's Antony who (had he seen the 3½-hour screen-version (in VistaVision and Technicolor) the 3½-hour screen-version which King Vidor has made in

VistaVision of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Plaza, Lower Regent Street)) which, while relieved

Had King Antony seen the 3½-hour screen-version which Vidor's Shakespeare

Had Shakespeare's Antony seen the 3½-hour screen-version which King Vidor in VistaVision and Technicolor

"All length is torture," said Shakespeare's Antony who of course had not seen King Vidor's 3½-hour VistaVision version

VistaVision adaptation had not seen King Vidor's 3½-hour screen-version in VistaVersion and Technicolor of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Plaza, Lower Regent Street) whose ten-minute intermission on the eve of Borodino provides the sort of relief for which Shakespeare's Bernardo in *Hamlet*

Shakespeare's Francisco in *Hamlet* Francisco in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* Francisco in *Hamlet*

for which Francisco would have proffered "much thanks"

"For this relief much thanks!" is how we feel inclined to echo Shakespeare's Francisco during the ten-minute intermission (on the eve of Borodino) which mercifully punctuates King Vidor's 3½-hour screen-adaptation (in VistaVision and Technicolor) of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Plaza, Lower Regent Street)—of which Shakespeare's Antony (had he seen it) might (maliciously!) have said: "For this relief might (maliciously!) have said: "All length is

Space prevents me from dealing at proper length with *War and Peace* (Plaza, Lower Regent Street) which I hope to review next week.

"Colombo, Friday.—The two chief Buddhist Mahanayakes (equivalent of the Dean of Canterbury) boycotted a visit by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai to the Dalada Maligawa, in Kandy to-day."

Daily Mail

Different views, though.





Eyeless in Saga

By ALEX ATKINSON

(This fragment, recently found blowing about in the Californian desert, was written on the fly-leaf of an old copy of "The Art of Seeing." It may have some connection with the fact that Mr. Aldous Huxley has at last been asked to write a full-length Mister Magoo film.)

... and the Scene changes to Tuscany. Raw umber and sage green shades predominate. A scumble effect would be useful, especially in the backgrounds. The music is Cherubini, Palestrina, Monteverdi (not the madrigals), Schütz, Gluck, and a little Carissimi. MAGOO, during his villeggiatura near Leghorn, is seen wandering through his villa, now and then

breaking into a nervous piaffe. Palpebral flutterings tell us that he is looking for something. He pauses to admire the reflet of a bisque statue of Medusa in the bathroom.

MAGOO (patting it): Take the evening off, you lovely creature, when you've dried yourself. I'll lock up.

He trots away, muttering in langue

d'oc, and comes at last to a row of shelves containing jars and bottles. He peers along the bottom shelf con amore, and finds a jar marked "Metheglin."

Ah, at last! Mescaline, by George! Now for an hour or two of blissful hallucination! (Pouring himself a tot): I hope it agrees with the ptisan I quaffed with my ramekin at luncheon.

(He drinks.) H'm. Tastes like honey.

He wanders into the garden. Cy-presses, olives, ilex, terraces, a preponderance of chryselephantine statuary. A feeling of laissez-aller pervades the scene. A pigeon flutters down on to an ornamental urn.

(Watching it): Yes, just as I thought: dead dogs falling from the sky already. This is the life! Things seen resemble images in a thaumatrope. (Squinting up at the washing on the line): I must take up nephology some day. When I've finished my Hudibrastic epopee, perhaps. What now?

The village postman is toiling up the hill. He is epicine, setiferous, ventricose, cursorial, his breath smelling of macédoine.

(Seeing him): Ah. Here come the apes. Oh, this is splendid stuff, splendid. Knowledge was never so empiric! I wonder how it compares to d-lysergic acid diethylamide tartrate? Permanent schizophrenia is the thing to avoid, of course. (As the postman holds out a letter): No. Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes, my good ape. Here's a soldo for yourself.

He hurries out on to the road. A horse-drawn vettura approaches, with an American tourist at the reins, bearing an en-tout-cas.

Oh, capital! This will be old Charon to row me over the Styx, I suppose. Oh, great fun! Oh, brave new world! How's Erebus keeping?

TOURIST: Jump in, bud. I'm an Episcopalian myself.

MAGOO: Chose jugée, my dear fellow, chose jugée. (Jumping in and fishing a medal of the Legion d'Honneur from his pocket): Here's an obolus for you. My last one, as it happens. (As the en-tout-cas pokes him in the ribs): Easy with your fork, now—we're not there yet.

The vettura moves off bumpily towards Pisa. (Looking over the side): H'm. Bit choppy to-day.

TOURIST: Where you heading for, bud?

MAGOO (chuckling): Ho ho, that's a good one! Hades of course, you wag.

TOURIST: Philosopher, huh? D'you reckon there's anything really flagitious in plutarchy? How strong are you on Democritean homiletics?

MAGOO: Come now, this is no time for logogriphs. (Aside): Ought to be some dancing girls, surely? Or am I thinking of marijuana?

On the outskirts of Pisa he falls out of the vettura and rolls down some steps into a blacksmith's shop.

Oops! That was short and sweet. So this is Hades!

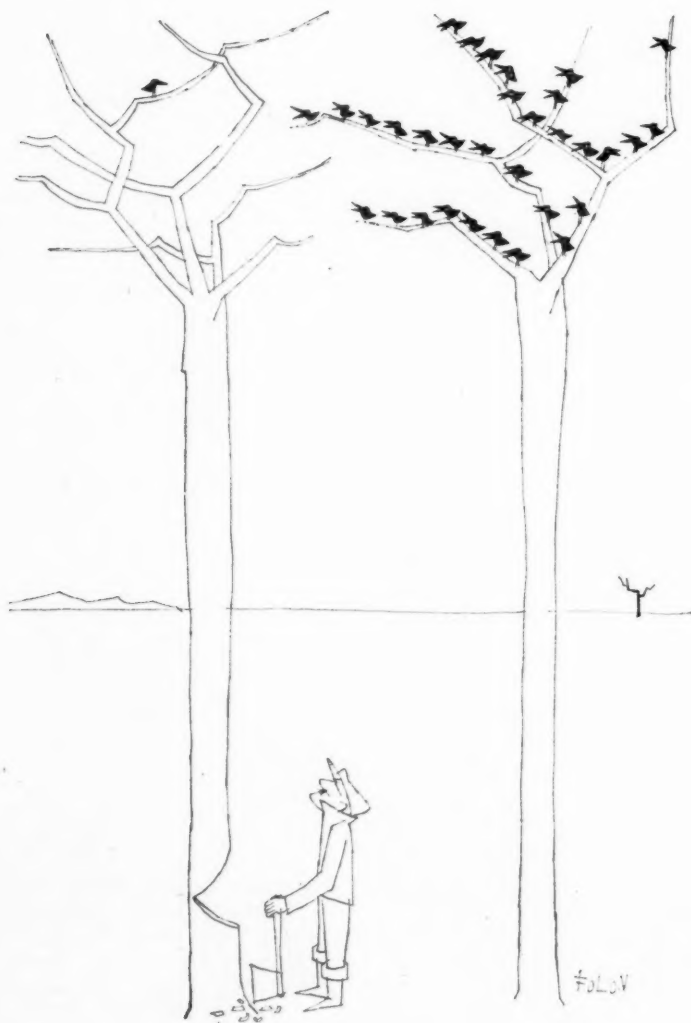
Three Blenheim spaniels approach, sniffing.

Ah there, Cerberus! (Aside): By George, but this is remarkable stuff. The sensation of heat is most accurate.

His coat-tails begin to smoulder. He hurries out into the street, and trots gaily into Pisa.

Once in Pisa, he engages (strepitoso) in brjef sciamachy with three headscarves caught in an eddy in the Piazza del Duomo, believing them to be migrating yogi; marvels at the Campanile, assuming it to be a rococo Vistavision barber's pole in papier-maché left over from an epic; mistakes a passing schoolboy in a cowboy hat for Christopher Isherwood, congratulating him on his cryptæsthesia, his Irving Berlin diary, and his translation of the Bhagavadgita (whereupon the schoolboy reviles him as an erubescens saltimbanco); and holds forth enthusiastically upon Tintoretto's sciagraphy to a seedy flâneur selling vile postcards.

Well, so much for Hell. Now what. I wonder? Oh, I wish I'd found this stuff when I was ten years younger. Still, once an opsimath always an opsimath . . .





Avignon, Berks

IF Abingdon were Avignon,
And Berkshire were Provence;
And if for softly running Thames
The Rhone's turbidity
Went rushing perilously on,
How different things would be!
The Queen's Hotel might well become
L'Hôtel du Midi.

*Sur le pont d'Abingdon
L'on y danse, l'on y danse.
Sur le pont d'Avignon
L'on y danse tout en rond.*

If Avignon were Abingdon,
How different again!
The dampish English market square
With pubs for cafés, beer for wine,
Nestling incongruously there,
And round it, in the southern glare,
The parched Provençal plain.

*Sur le pont d'Avignon
Morris dancers Morris dancing.
Sur le pont d'Abingdon
Morris dancers carry on.*

Avignon bridge is broken down,
Abingdon's is complete.
Abingdon has no Papal seat,
Avignon no Crown.
Abingdon's countryside is green,
Avignon's is brown,
And so forth and so on.
Oh, yes, the two are quite distinct:
Distinct, then, let them be,
Nor grow inextricably linked,
Lest we should look to see
The Thames reflecting Avignon
And Abingdon the Rhone.

*Sous le pont d'Avignon
Thames run softly, Thames run
softly.*

*Sous de pont d'Abingdon
Rhone rush swiftly, swiftly on.*

JOHN PETRIE





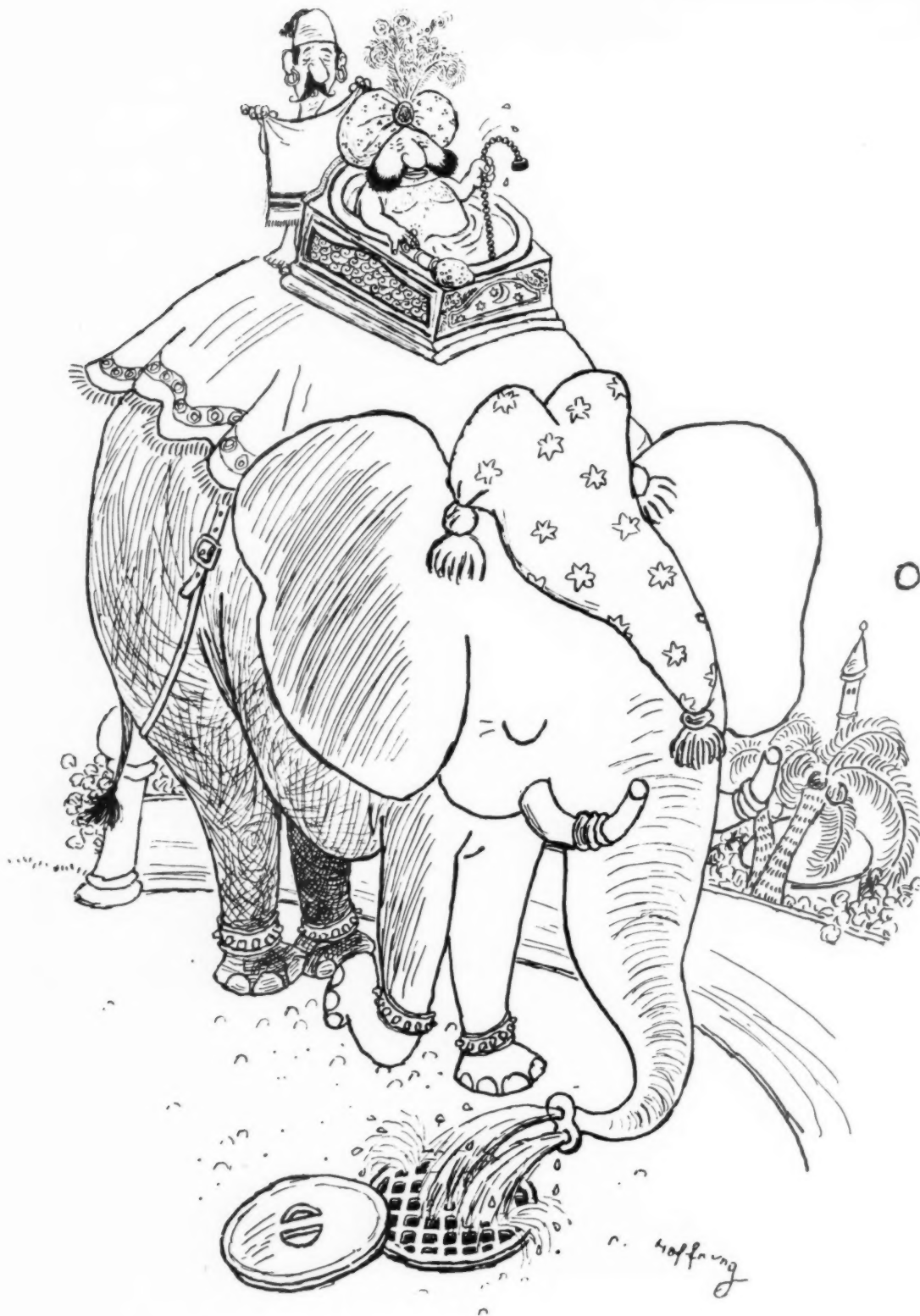
General Sir Brian Robertson

I am the very model of a modern railway mandarin;
There isn't a profession that a soldier could feel grander in.
I've served in quite a lot of wars—two great ones and a puny 'un—
And represented Dunlops for a decade in the Union.
In short, although the transport world I'm not an Alexander in,
I am the very model of a modern railway mandarin.

HEROES OF OUR TIME — II

PUNCH, March 13 1937





The Swing

By CLAUD COCKBURN

THOUGH just a little marred here and there by unpredictable swings, nearly total indifference, and a badly floating influx, yesterday's meeting of the south-east Messington "Whither?" group was more or less successfully addressed by Mr. S. E. Messington—widely known locally as "the Alanbrooke of the Apathy Graphs"—on "Some Duties and Experiences of a By-Election Scanner."

Emphasizing that no introduction was necessary, the Chairman introduced Mr. Messington as a fine old trouper who had been juggling trends at the Town Hall before many of those present were born. He was known and loved by millions as Mr. Percentage Poll, and his statement on the eve of Wednesday—"Anything can happen and something will"—was still vivid in everyone's recollection.

After singing "The Red Flag" and "Land of Hope and Glory," the audience settled itself to hear from his own lips the story of the man who had passed through four recent by-elections in disguise, armed only with an old swing-detector captured from the *Observer* and an intuition that kicked like a mule.

"Time and again," said Mr. Messington, "I'd get on the old hunch and ride her all day, only to find that the whole happy hunting ground had been devastated by a herd of incalculable factors, and the local scanners had taken to the woods. Day and night too one had to keep one's eyes skinned for Independents—and Heaven help the scanner who falls a-foul of one of them. Even post-result estimators are not safe from these ruthless creatures."

It was at this point that a man brandishing a broken statistic, thought to have been looted from the London School of Economics, attempted to rush the platform, shouting that his mother had been a pure-blooded Independent and he had not come there to be insulted. Only on Mr. Messington's assurance that nothing personal was intended, and that many of his best friends were Independents, did he consent to leave the hall quietly, followed by a disgruntled Tory who, on being asked what percentage of middle-class citizens he represented, and why, was understood

to reply that in his view Clause 9 should have been seized at the outset, without reference to the United Nations or anyone else.

Quick to appreciate the long-term significance of this remark, Mr. Messington won general applause with a brilliant display of quick appreciations, including a faultless performance of the particularly difficult Megan Assessment.

"A careful study of the principal factors," said Mr. Messington, in a statement which he gave the press permission to quote in full, "discloses—even though the disclosure be dismaying to those who are either too partisan or too lazy to conduct a full analysis of what is happening before our very eyes—that Lady Megan Lloyd is a Welsh woman whose father was a famous Prime Minister of the same name. Let those," he continued amid cheers, "who are inclined to bury their heads in the sand face those facts."

He added that a full range of facts of equal quality was obtainable from Messington's Political Service.

In his considered opinion, he said, the future for scanners and estimators had never been so bright. Admittedly they had had their setbacks. But they, and their American friends, had triumphed over greater difficulties in the past—he need only remind them of the fine record of some of those indomitable American scanners who, after disastrous defeats in three successive Presidential elections, were still carrying on and even making a small profit.

Nor were profits everything. History showed that it was possible to run almost anything from a railway to a Health Service at a heavy loss provided you kept your moral influence in good condition.

"We scanners and estimators," he said, "may be a relatively small body, but there is nothing to prevent us achieving a moral influence out of all proportion to our numbers—nothing, that is, except the apathy and derision with which our efforts are greeted in some quarters where the nature of the obstacles confronting us is not fully understood."

Asked whether, as a general rule, he considered a rise in one Party's poll to be of greater significance than a fall in another's, or *vice versa*, the lecturer

replied "No, other things being equal."

When a woman at the back of the hall shouted "Are they ever?", Mr. Messington pointed out that that was just the sort of thing which, so far from being helpful to the true interests of trend-detectors, could do untold harm.

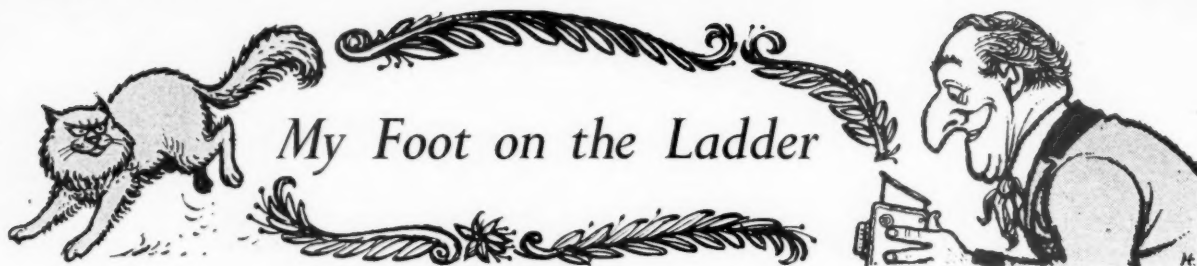
"Surely," he said, "it is as clear as daylight that while the popularity of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition never stood higher, these members of the middle class who except in other circumstances would be inclined to cast their vote for the Conservatives or for Labour, as the case may be, have been rendered critical and in some cases bewildered by such factors as the succession of alleged delays in raising Cain in Ismailia, rents, the standard of living, the whole issue of European co-operation, and the *Edgar Bonnet*."

"In these circumstances it can be confidently stated that a shift in the relative percentage of votes cast at a given by-election must never be examined without the use of the aftermath which every estimator should keep ready to hand."

Persistently questioned regarding the average length of an aftermath, the lecturer good-humouredly replied, amid loud laughter, that in the hands of a good estimator it could be made as long as a piece of string, or shorter—always depending upon local conditions which could be decisive unless national issues proved to carry more weight with the electorate.



ROY DAVIS



AT 3.40 Pox and Dolores came back from lunch and were heard going into the studio. Fonteyn and Rarecatch sprang to attention and started ramming me into 'The Little Boy Look Goes South.' The shorts were tighter than ever. Asked Fonteyn if I ought to do something about the size of my behind but she said a little slicing in the dark room would soon put that right.

Dolores had been quite well arranged on top of a step ladder. She was sitting cross-legged in a man's shirt made of gold kid and there was a label hanging behind with 157 gns. on it.

When Pox saw me he bowed very low and his upper lip did a funny little jump and he said "Madam, pray be seated on the third rung." Tried to arrange myself in a graceful manner on the ladder without wobbling Dolores, who went on sitting up very straight and staring into the lights. Suddenly a hideous scream came from the outer darkness.

"Don't panic," said Fonteyn's voice. "It's Scarlet Lake. He's fallen off his ring, poor sweet." Pox caught sight of him for the first time.

"But I *must* have him in," he cried. "Dolores, cuddle him!"

"The ring will have to come too, I'm afraid," said his Aunt, appearing before the lights. "He's been very upset." So Fonteyn took one side of the ring and Aunt the other and Scarlet Lake was lifted to Dolores' eye-level. You could see from the way they looked at each other that it was loathe at first sight. Scarlet Lake was making a worse face than usual.

"Now, now," said Pox warningly, "love him," and the ring was laid on Dolores' crossed legs.

Almost immediately a hissing noise started above me and when I looked up I saw that Scarlet Lake's cushion had gone completely flat. I think Dolores had played a dirty trick. No wonder she was called Anti-House-Snort at school.

But the funny thing was that Scarlet Lake was now quite still. Dolores had him in a rather complicated grip with his hindquarters between her legs and his head pressed lovingly against hers. She had a good grip on the fur at the back of his neck and I'd say, from the look on his face, that she was applying a bit of a twist. Torture always was her top leisure-time activity.

Pox said he still wasn't quite happy about the composition. (Think by composition he meant me, Dolores, Scarlet Lake and the ladder.) He said that Pink Puss had introduced a note of the harem and could anything be done about *me*!

"But honey," said Fonteyn, "she just screams for monstrous earrings."

"And wicked wicked ah-lashes," said Rarecatch, and they set off for the dressing room at a smart canter.

Rarecatch was back first with the false eyelashes. Fonteyn was a close second with two enormous brass curtain rings and the sucked sweetie beads.

Suddenly Pox raised his hand and said "Silence, if you *pliz*, ladies." There descended a deadly hush. Pox took three measured steps backwards, bowed his head, arranged his camera on his tummy and said very softly "Now, dear girl, be yourself."

Well, honestly, it *was* a bit difficult. I mean, there wasn't much room on the third step of the ladder, and although the lights were too bright to see anybody I could feel them all staring out of the darkness, and then I had to keep leaning backwards so that my sucked sweeties would hang in the V at the back, and I didn't dare smile in case my make-up cracked, and the curtain rings were stretching my ears so that I felt like a spaniel, and the shorts were getting tighter every moment and the glue from the eyelashes was running into my eyes, and as soon as I *did* get into the right position Dolores would wobble on top of the ladder (I'm sure she couldn't

help it) or hiss "Your tongue's sticking out" or "Pull your belly in," which of course was really jolly nice of her.

"You know, sweet child," said Pox, after a bit, "I still don't feel you're *one hundred per cent* relaxed. Why do you lean back like an affronted dowager all the time?" Told him about the sucked sweeties having to hang at the back and he came up and looked at them very closely for a bit.

"Eureka," cried he. "I have it," and his upper lip did it again. Suddenly realized why. He was twitching the place where his moustache *used* to be before he caught the falcon disease.

"You must do what dear Bea did with her pearls on Broadway. Make them fly and I'll catch them in action."

Getting the sweeties to fly was jolly difficult actually. Bet darling Bea had practised. Had to do a sort of samba from the waist up and I'd just get them airborne when they'd do a crash landing into the fifth step of the ladder, and once into Dolores' foot, which suddenly dangled down. Also, as I only had about a quarter of my bottom on the ladder, every time I started to swing my sweeties I came unseated.

Pox decided this might account for the strained look on my face and said I'd better be clamped. Malcolm seemed to understand. He went out nodding grimly and came back with a huge iron stand with a pair of giant claws attached to it. He stood the stand behind the ladder, arranged the claws round my middle and started slowly tightening an enormous rusty screw until I really was in an iron embrace. Then he walked away smiling in a rather beastly way.

Pox seemed satisfied too. He stood back and half shut his eyes. Dolores still sat absolutely motionless. She must have been sitting cross-legged for about an hour. Tried to look one hundred per cent relaxed.

"I think I'd like another bod," Pox said slowly.

My feet, who had turned up, was rushed out to the dressing room between Fonteyn and Rarecatch and came back almost immediately in an orange sarong. Pox had her propped on the ladder just above me and said "O.K., dowager, swing your sweeties. And all of you, look very very happy," and he started to do a slow spidery dance round us, his eyes glued to his camera.

"Think of a *big* birthday cake with lots of candles . . . Christmas morning in the country when you were *oh* so small . . . a mink coat and a pile of rocks . . . Yes, yes, hold it . . . perfection . . . not to move . . ." (his voice was going higher and higher). "Just going to shift the ladder a fraction . . ." and he gave it a little tug with his free hand. It didn't move but everything started to sway. First we seemed to go

backwards, then forwards, and then suddenly there was a most tremendous crash, and we were all on the floor in a heap.

Fonteyn, Rarecatch and Clara all began screaming and Aunt said "Oh, my poor Scarlet Lake" over and over again.

Actually Scarlet Lake was the first to recover, although he was at the bottom of the pile. He snaked out between my feet's feet and made for the door.

Then somebody thought of picking the ladder off us and my feet emerged and yawned. Got up myself as far as my clamp would allow and there was only Dolores left. She was on her side in a very odd position making funny little grunting noises. I think she was rather badly hurt.

First Fonteyn said "Upsy daisy, old girl," and then Pox said "Make with

the feet, dear," but she didn't move. In the end they had to phone an ambulance and Pox and Malcolm carried her out on a chair. She was sitting bolt upright looking straight out to sea and her legs were still crossed.

It took me twenty-five minutes to unscrew the clamp by myself, and I still can't get the eyelashes off.

SUSAN CHITTY

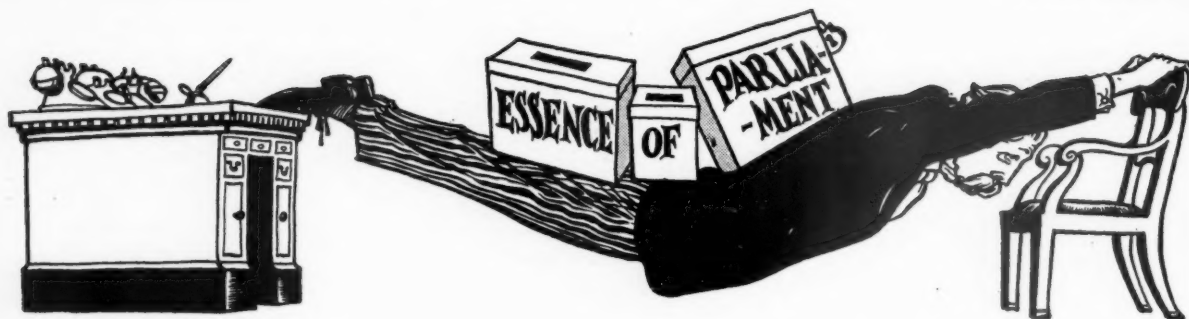
All Rounder

" . . . Anna, a kind of *femme fatale* of unconventional integrity, in sex and everything else, will arouse violently conflicting emotions. Some will love her, some will loathe her, and some will simultaneously do both: some may even be indifferent to her, but, if so, then with a passionate and engaged indifference."

Blurb for "A Ship of Glass"



"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you . . ."



IT was fairly obvious before Monday's rather foolish debate about Sir David Eccles was half-way through that what could sensibly be said about it—and indeed all that could sensibly be said—was, as not infrequently happens, said by Mr. Grimond. It was obvious on the one hand that Sir David had been rather careless. Lord Hinchinbrooke's highly amusing speech was sensible in itself but not really relevant. It may be a good thing to take a crack at the Treasury—or indeed to take a crack at Mr. Gaitskell. It may be that there is no foundation for the superstition that taxation policy can only properly be announced on Budget Day and after the Stock Exchange has closed. But the complaint against Sir David was not that he had announced Government's policy. Nobody complained of the considered statement that he made in his formal speech on the authority of the Chancellor—that the Chancellor would take the levy into account in framing his taxation proposals. That indeed was no more than a repetition of what had been promised already. The complaint was of the casual aside in which he appeared to go much further. It is difficult to see why Sir David did not at once apologize for his slip and thus save all the bother.

But the person who really has a grievance is Mr. Thorneycroft, although he was too loyal to say so. If Government taxation policy is to be announced, then the Chancellor clearly has a right to demand that it be announced by himself or by a colleague, using words specially authorized by himself. He has a right to complain of colleagues who jump the gun. As it was, Mr. Thorneycroft was justified enough in claiming that nothing that he had said could be held to commit him in the least concerning any Entertainment Tax other than that on cinemas, and that he had not yet

made up his mind on the general question. Dr. Dalton, a voice from the past, introduced what is called a personal note into the debate by comparing his own blob with that of Sir David. There were, as he truly said, differences between the two cases, of which one was that Dr. Dalton resigned and Sir David did not. But there was another difference almost more important, and that was that when Dr. Dalton leaked he did leak. The journalist in whom he confided did at least know what the Government was going to do. But the result of the *affaire Eccles* is that at the end of it the Government's policy is more completely anybody's guess than it was at the beginning. We can only hope that the upshot of it all will not be that Mr. Thorneycroft will now refuse concessions that he had it otherwise in mind to make.

But I wish that Mr. Thorneycroft had not been so fully taken up with the Eccles case—that, I presume, was the explanation—that he had not had time to do his homework on the much more important question of German contribution to defence costs. For it was, alas, all too clear that he simply did not know the answer to the question whether the Germans could call for a revision of the £50 millions if we reduced our forces in Germany.

Nothing is odder than the Parliamentary joke. Mr. Leslie Hale, telling the tale how Sir David was found by a newspaper correspondent contemplating his crocuses, said that he should have been in his kitchen garden contemplating his leeks. Now, Mr. Hale is one of the wittiest of living conversationalists. But this crack really was not quite *alpha plus*. I should be disappointed if I did not get something better than that in at least every other sentence of Mr. Hale's conversation. Indeed even in this speech it was a much greater triumph to get the Prime Minister to his feet to explain that he had not got an uncle. But the House for some strange reason found this play on words absolutely side-splitting. Members rolled over one another in their agony of amusement.



Lady Megan Lloyd George



Sir David Eccles and friends

In the same way the next day, as Lady Megan Lloyd George stood at the bar, waiting to take her seat, Mr. Maudling was telling the House about "megawatts." A Socialist Member affected to think that the word was "meganwatts." This, too, was frightfully funny.

So the House's brief Lloyd George-less interlude is ended. Lady Megan looked a bit overawed by the occasion. The Socialists were exultant, in good biblical form, having more joy over the one Liberal that had repented than over the ninety and nine good Trades Unionists that needed no repentance. Mr. Gaitskell, behind the Speaker's chair, seized her by both hands. The Liberal present looked glum.

Ghana, thanks to Mr. Hector Hughes, has arisen ("I care not who writes the country's laws, so long as I may write its songs"), and Lord Hailsham is doubtless feeling nervous about his Laureateship. But even Mr. Hector Hughes' poetry was not enough for Mr. Callaghan. He thought that all the school-children in this country should have a holiday in Ghana's honour. Mr. Macmillan pleaded that he was going to broadcast after the nine o'clock news, but Mr. Callaghan felt that that was by no means the same thing.

The Navy Estimates were not very thrilling because, while everyone agreed that most of the Navy was going to be scrapped, Mr. Soames was not yet ready to give the details. So Mr.

Bottomley was concerned about what would happen to his constituents at Chatham. Admiral Hughes-Hallett was concerned about what would happen to admirals, and a lady in the Stranger's Gallery was concerned about what would happen to "democracy"—though a policeman and Mr. Fenner Brockway between them passed her out so quickly that it was unfortunately not possible to discover what was her precise point of concern. It is only fair to the Admiral to say that when he was concerned about admirals he was concerned that there should be so many. He left no doubt about it that most of the admirals should be sacked—of course with adequate compensation—and was indeed very doubtful whether there should be an independent Navy at all. The less Navy, seems to be the formula, the more admirals; and similarly, according to Lord Moynihan in the Lords, the fewer colonies the more civil servants in the Colonial Office—16,061 to-day as against 372 in 1935. His lordship plaintively and justly wondered what would be the size of the Colonial Office when we no longer had any colonies at all. And so on Thursday when we came to the Air Force; there the formula which combined progress with economy seemed to be "If we had any missiles they would be guided." An electronic brain called a simulator will tell us, if there had been an enemy and there had been any defences, whether the enemy

would have been destroyed. Mr. Mallalieu thought that the Navy ought to be based on Nova Scotia; Mr. Hugh Fraser thought that it ought to be based on Kenya; Mr. George Thomas thought that it ought to be based on Christian principles. What with one thing and another Britannia does not seem to rule so very many waves these days.

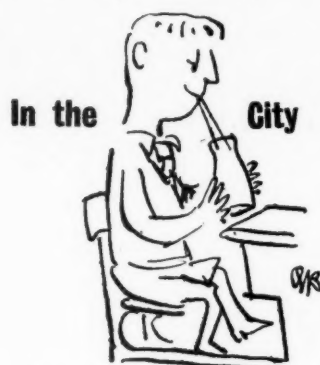
On Wednesday—a good debate in the Lords on taxation, introduced by Lord Coleraine, who complained that the country these days was too largely ruled by envy. Lord Hailsham, determined that he at any rate should not be accused of leaking, made it plain that he was talking out of his own head and not from a Treasury brief and talked all the better for that. Our condition, he thought, was one of high but precarious prosperity. The Commons meanwhile were mainly concerned with Japanese anxiety about our nuclear experiments—that and whether Government-employed barristers ought to sit in the House of Commons. As for the barristers, the Socialist barristers, being quite sure that the amendment would be defeated, were able to demonstrate their impartiality by speaking against it and voting for it. As for the nuclear experiments, the question is not so much whether these experiments are dangerous as what they are for.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS





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Fivers and/or Cheques

IT will have escaped nobody's notice, I think, that the Bank of England has issued a new five-pound note to celebrate the Ministry of Labour's latest report on average earnings. Manual workers in Britain are now getting more than ten pounds a week (the take-home pay of adult males averaging £11 18s.) and the fiver in its new popular cheap edition is obviously an answer to the pay-clerk's prayer.

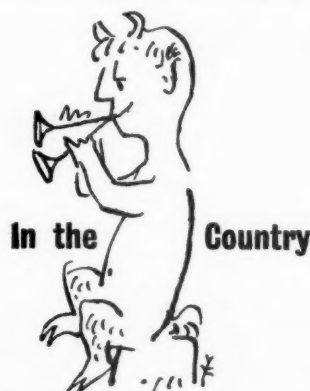
This new fiver is not a beautiful thing. It is rather like a Victorian sampler as seen in a nightmare by the Council of Industrial Design. Amorphous panels sprawl on both sides, vaguely suggesting lacework, commemorative masonry, wallpaper and the covers of old-fashioned exercise books. There is Britannia (decapitated), St. George and the Dragon, a lovable old lion mauling a key on a chain, and the magic signature "L. K. O'Brien." The note is slightly larger than the one-pound note, and therefore resists every attempt by the owner to stow it away uncreased in the standard wallet. It is multicoloured but predominantly bluish, and most people familiar with the trend of prices will regard this as cynically significant.

My bank clerk (the charges debited to my account are such that I feel possessive towards him) told me that the new fiver has not been in very great demand. Roughly twenty-five per cent of our customers, he said, always ask for ten-shilling notes in preference to pound-notes because (a) the ten-bob note will lie flat in most wallets, and (b) by tendering the small note for all shopping transactions they reduce their chances of receiving short change. With these facts in mind he felt that it would take some years—and a few more bursts of inflation—for the fiver to become generally acceptable.

The old fiver, a work of art if ever I saw one, will remain legal tender, and the Bank of England has promised to issue an entirely new series of notes of

all denominations. They will carry a portrait of the Queen.

Many people, including the bankers, would like to see weekly wages paid by cheque, but the unions with some justification are lukewarm about the proposal. They point out that the banks would be swamped on pay-day, that there would be long, disgruntled queues at the cashier's counter, and that their members would certainly object to such iniquitous levies as bank charges and stamp duty. They are doubtful too about the wisdom of building new branch banks—some thousands would be needed—at a time when the country needs all its labour, steel and bricks for industrial purposes. They do not, however, mention one overriding snag in



Scope for Inventors

CAN nothing persuade our inventors to turn their attention to the needs of the countryside? Like other farmers I'm still using implements which were designed in the Bronze Age. The blue-prints for some of our present agricultural machinery were scratched originally on the walls of caves. Since when, nobody has bothered to revise the patent. Of course we're not expecting the benefits of electronics to be applied to agriculture just yet. That would be asking too much three centuries too soon. We would be quite satisfied now if we were introduced to some of the gadgets belonging to the Age of Steam. As I write this I can see one of my neighbours laboriously using a leaden hand-pump to fill his cattle trough. The Welfare State reached us; it's a pity that the Industrial Revolution didn't too.

When people try to frighten me with the terrors of automation or point out that machines can't think for themselves I reply that I can take those disadvantages in my stride. I've been employing men for years.

Of course we can hardly expect

the wages-by-cheque system—the difficulty of collecting union dues more than fifty yards or so from the pay-clerk's office.

It seems therefore that the fiver is likely to beat the cheque in the race to cash in on inflation. Since 1939 five-pound notes have nearly doubled their share of the note circulation, from 7½ per cent to 13½ per cent, and they now have their place in the pay packets of certain skilled trades, including coalmining. The only real obstacle in the way of the fiver's progress is its vaguely disreputable connections with the Turf, the black market and the world of the spiv. Would you mind putting your name and address on the back, please?

MAMMON

* * *

scientists or research institutes at universities to bother about agriculture. Though it is still our largest industry, it is one which only farmers take seriously. But if I can't enlist the interest of inventors proper, perhaps I can arouse the person who has occasionally a bright and useful idea. For instance, will some small boy abandon his homework and promptly invent a tractor magneto which is impervious to damp and will spark and save my temper on misty mornings? Can some granny lay down her knitting and design us a paintbrush which will not flood the paint down my wrists and up my sleeve whenever I distemper the ceiling?

Perhaps it's beyond my scope to prod this nation, which has become so befuddled and debauched by facetiousness that it mistakes parlour games for entertainment and Angry Young Men for important artists, into any sort of creative activity; but there must be someone somewhere who hasn't been lulled into complete passivity, and whose mind is still sufficiently clear to think up a way of stopping farmhouse hearths from smoking. Automatic control was invented fifty years ago. Why hasn't some dolt applied it to taps so that they can be turned off automatically when your diesel oil can is filled, and you no longer have to stand around waiting for the drips, or go and do another job and then return to observe the waste? Other farmers can make their own list of inventions we need. One in my village wants a TV set which he can tune in to observe what is going on in his neighbour's kitchen. He bought the set on that understanding.

RONALD DUNCAN



CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

Wider Still and Wider

The Dangerous Estate. Francis Williams.
Longmans, 24/-

A HANDY vanity, or protective roughening of the skin, saves most journalists and ninety-eight per cent of newspaper proprietors from more than an occasional occurrence of that ulcer-giving nightmare known as Publicist's Shakes or the Can-You-Hear-Me-John delusion.

In extreme cases the victim vividly sees himself in the position of a man booming away into a telephone, informing, exhorting, denouncing, advising, telling the latest and funniest stories—his whole output guaranteed to keep the table in a roar of vital argument, excited comment, grateful acceptance of what the doctor ordered, and reasonably wholesome mirth—and then in his horrid dream he becomes aware that the people at the other end have put the receiver down on the chair; are playing the guitar; have gone for a walk: nobody at all is listening.

Alarm at the terrors of the press, coupled with the cry of "Shades of Delane!"—though rampant in the first three or so decades of this century—has now abated—along with the notion that Delane of *The Times* was quite such a St. George as he had momentarily appeared to people who had just come up against the Harmsworths. So much so that anyone who has read recent analyses of how much, or little, newspaper circulation means in terms of direct political power and influence cannot but feel a rush of nearly tear-dropping sympathy for these frustrated press barons, floundering in the treacherous bog of an unrewarding Runnymede. More and more people pick up their receivers, fewer and fewer seem to

pay much serious attention to what the man is trying to say. All the man at the handing-out end of the wire seems to be getting is money.

And yet, and yet, although it repeatedly happens that when this or that baron points the way forward, a majority of the readers seems to be shading its eyes and scanning another route, the fact remains that more and more people are buying newspapers. It is this fact which Mr. Francis Williams faces on his first page and bears firmly in mind as he guides us all the way from the *Daily Courant*, first daily newspaper, published 1702, to the co-existence of the *Daily Mirror*, Sir William Haley, and Mr. Christiansen's *Daily Express*.

"In the last twenty-five years the population has increased by just over ten per cent; the readership of national daily newspapers by more than ninety per cent."

And a sobering bit of research into the educational statistics suggests to Mr. Williams that this ninety per cent amounts to just about all the literate citizens—literally literate, in the sense of people who can spell—that we have.

This book is a classic in its field—in the sense that from now on no one who has not read it had better dare to start airing his or her views on whatever happened, or is now happening, to the British press. Part of the vast, exciting territory it covers is of necessity fairly familiar to anyone who has ever thought about the nature and functions of what journalists who thought things were going to work out a bit more nobly than they did used to term "the Fourth Estate."

But—and it is a crucial test for a work of this kind—however much you think you know about a given piece of the subject matter, you are liable to find that Mr. Williams has told you more. It is a learned book—and anyone

who finds that sort of praise forbidding is the victim of a cultural Teddy-boyishness long out of fashion except, one must say, in some patches of the Fourth Estate. It is brilliantly constructed and, as the saying goes, "compulsively" readable. And, inevitably in view of its subject matter, large sections of it are as joltingly funny as the Chamber of Horrors.

"He went abroad only once in his life, for a day trip to Le Touquet, and invariably spent his annual holiday of four weeks at the same place, the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne. There, he and his wife . . . listened enraptured each evening to the orchestra in the Palm Court, throwing disapproving glances at fellow guests, who chatted or rattled coffee cups; their favourite tune was the Blue Danube Waltz. He rarely entertained, still more rarely went to a theatre, had no interest in conversation except on business matters, listened to almost nothing on the radio except 'Lift Up Your Hearts.'"

The portrait is that of the late Lord Southwood, proprietor of the *Daily Herald* and one of the major architects of modern British journalism. There are many other such portraits, equally stimulating to the thoughtful.

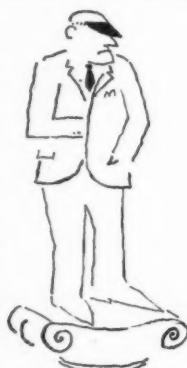
One may single out two main theses in Mr. Williams' book. With the first I agree unreservedly—namely that the modern mass-circulation newspaper has not created a taste for vulgarity and sensationalism but merely caters more efficiently for a taste which has always existed but was previously starved. The second and more general one is that the true "independence" of a newspaper depends, in the last analysis, on its being a commercially sound proposition. H'm. And as Mr. Williams surveys the implications of his view, he too can be heard muttering a "H'm" or so.

CLAUD COCKBURN

Loafer's Quest

Happy as Larry. Thomas Hinde.
Macgibbon and Kee, 15/-

Larry loafs, drinks and repeatedly lets his wife down. He wanders in and out of the kind of arty, drunken parties that used to be described in the detective



novels of my youth. A friend is being blackmailed over an indecent photograph he has lost and Larry searches for it, thinking, or trying to think, that this quest is the one generous, responsible enterprise of his life, though when he succeeds it is clear that he is simply trying to create gratitude that will lead to another loan. However, the blurb, which takes a generally more trusting and optimistic view of his character than the novel does—perhaps it was written by a retired Probation Officer—says we are left with hope for his future.

While *Mr. Nicholas* brilliantly used the reader's stock responses to an outdated fictional framework, its successor fails to bring it off again. If you approach it not as the second novel of a very promising novelist but in isolation, its clean, crisp writing and its invention of detail hold the attention. I found it exasperating but very readable.

R. G. G. P.

The Master. T. H. White. *Cape*, 15/-

Children's book. The plot is *Wizard* stuff: one hundred-and-fifty-year-old supergenius with prodigious E.S.P. and mesmeric powers, living quite comfortably *inside* Rockall, proposes to hold the world to ransom with his vibrator units, but is foiled by the Twins. He has a sinister Chinese assistant and has to dull his higher levels of perception with whisky in order to do anything elementary like talking English. On the other hand, as one would expect from the author of *The Sword in the Stone*, the story is very intelligently written, full of good realistic detail and, within the limitations of the plot, sticking to reasonable possibilities. The atmosphere is pretty claustrophobic in a hospital-like way; the children are likeable if a bit precocious about their conversation; the dénouement is slightly sloppy. P. D.

International Theatre Annual No. 1.

Edited by Harold Hobson. *John Calder*, 21/-

This team survey, generously illustrated, offers the key to an operations room where we can see the theatrical score all over the world for the year ending April 1956. There are critical reports of the different countries' seasons (particularly encouraging in the cases of Canada, Australia and the growing rash of little theatres off Broadway), slightly gossipy articles of less value, and finally a useful list of all the world premières during the period. The health of the theatre continues to be precarious; but, as Harold Hobson points out, it is comforting that the drama should have pulled itself together so notably in New York, where TV has its firmest grip.

The contributions vary considerably in quality, and contain too many misprints (the happiest, a "shake-charmer's flute"), but criticism prevails. Easily the most controversial comes from Sam Wanamaker, who utters the curdling

prophecy that Brecht's methods will dominate the Western theatre.

E. O. D. K.

The Fall. Albert Camus. *Hamish Hamilton*, 10/6

Forsaking his career as a successful Parisian barrister, noted for good works and popular in the *grand monde*, Jean-Baptiste Clamence establishes himself as a "judge-penitent" in Amsterdam, whose "concentric canals resemble the circles of hell." The book is cast in the form of a monologue, with brief, graphic descriptions of scenery and background heading each section, and only after ninety-one pages (of flashback into the narrator's former life) is the real meaning of Clamence's enigmatic new "profession" explained. Unfortunately his conclusions—that most people are unconscious hypocrites, that generosity is not entirely disinterested, etc.—are not particularly original, and the paradoxes stale *réchauffés* of Dostoevsky and Oscar Wilde: "Inasmuch as every judge some day ends up as a penitent, one had to travel the road in the opposite direction and practise the profession of penitent to be able to end up as a judge."

Mr. Justin O'Brien's translation—apart from an occasional awkwardness—faithfully reflects Clamence's flowery conversational style, with its "ironic" colloquial overtones sometimes reminiscent of Céline.

J. M-R.

Toward the Sun. Charles Plumb. *Parry Jackman*, 10/6

Mr. Charles Plumb, who in the 'twenties edited *Oxford Poetry* with W. H. Auden, now appears a little late in the day with three longish poems written during the past twenty-five years. An introductory note by Roy Campbell tells us that "Plumb is chiefly a thinker and a philosophical poet like Wordsworth," but there is an abstraction about Mr. Plumb's writing that makes the comparison inept. Much the most impressive thing here is "November 1940," an elegy for the lost world of pre-war London in which the finely-controlled rhythms and lines of varying length are a little reminiscent of Coventry Patmore—the sensual penitent, not the recorder of Victorian domesticity.

The comparison of the beauties of the past with the menace or promise of the future is admirably sustained, although one could wish Mr. Plumb had chosen other symbols than "Divine Montrachet, breathing Pouilly" for things that appeared then "ghosts across a silent sea." A later meditation on Hampton Court is ingenious but a little sentimental. A minor talent this, although a pleasant one. J. S.

Merchants of Wine. Alec Waugh. *Cassell*, 18/-

Their father having been a coach-proprietor ruined by the railways (hence the family addiction to horses), Walter



"Of course if there should be no Budget there can't possibly have been a leakage, can there?"

and Alfred Gilbey came back jobless from the Crimea, and tried their luck with a half-inch advertisement for Cape wines at 20s. a dozen. This venture was no sooner successful than it was torpedoed by Gladstone's budget, heavily in favour of France; but the brothers switched, with commendable agility, to the import of honest, inexpensive clarets, and quickly drew ahead of rivals who had failed to sense a new class of wine-drinkers. From these audacious beginnings came a firm now worth ten million pounds, and still run by the descendants of the original partners, Gilbeys, Blyths, Golds and Grinlings.

It is a romantic centenary story of the nicest kind of business, and Mr. Waugh has given it a wide range. Thoughtful bibbers will find much interesting comment on the social and literary history of wine during the period.

E. O. D. K.

One Half of the World. James Barlow. *Cassell*, 13/6

Mr. Barlow is a very professional writer of moral melodramas or pious thrillers, and he is so successful in revitalizing this inert form of fiction that I can listen to him telling almost any story. A policeman who works selflessly for the totalitarian occupiers of England changes sides and becomes an undercover agent for the Americans as a result

of either genuine conversion to Christianity or of love for a Christian girl. Of the two possible causes, the heroine's charms are rendered vividly, while the absence of an enemy spokesman makes the argument for conversion a little one-sided and dim.

This is not such a good book as *The Protagonists*. The documentary method is less convincing when the humdrum details from which the excitement is built exist within the framework of an imaginary future, at least unless a very high proportion of the novel is devoted to plodding towards credibility. The narrative holds the attention but sometimes distracts it from the variety and subtlety of what Mr. Barlow is saying about morality and religion.

R. G. G. P.

AT THE PLAY



La Dame Aux Camélias (PALACE)
Antony and Cleopatra (OLD VIC)
A Hatful of Rain (PRINCES)

IT was disappointing that Edwige Feuillère should have opened her new season with a play in which London had seen her so recently. *La Dame Aux Camélias* provides a long and

emotional part that has long been a magnet for star actresses, but it is too melodramatic a bag of tricks to stand up to repeated examination. One begins to realize all too clearly that in a technical jam Dumas turned to the letter with as much relief as, when cornered, his successors now turn to the telephone. And, since he wrote, the golden-hearted courtesan has become, if not exactly a figure of fun, at least a creature whose heartache and nobility have grown dangerously frayed at the edges. Marguerite Gauthier is no longer to be believed in; if one imagines her as existing a century ago, then some signs of her profession must cloud the idyll of her refinement. In short, this play isn't nearly good enough for Mme. Feuillère.

With all her skill and feeling even she cannot touch us with Marguerite's piled up agonies, but what she can do, and do beautifully, is demonstrate the delicacy and control of her own acting. Perhaps because she is now at home with an English audience, her performance is more positive than eighteen months ago, when her restraint seemed to cancel part of her effect; wisely she still denies herself the full-throttle passion that might tear the faded fabric of Dumas to shreds, but there is a new force in her Marguerite. How much Mme. Feuillère

can achieve with how great an economy, so that the movements of her hands and the smallest inflection of her voice add wonderfully to the sum of expression. She is such a dramatic actress that she can afford to work quietly; when, very occasionally, she pulls out a bigger stop, as in the scene with Armand's father, she shakes us.

Her production remains as it was, and equally workmanlike. The company she has gathered shows itself nothing remarkable at this first encounter, but Bernard Noël makes a sound if not dazzlingly romantic Armand, Maurice Bray catches the character of Gaston, and old Duval is played reasonably by Charles Nissar.

Antony and Cleopatra is horribly complicated by the fact that its hero and heroine, both holding great positions, spend the greater part of the play in making fools of themselves publicly. Robert Helpmann has extricated himself from this dilemma with some honour, and is helped particularly by Keith Michell, whose Antony, once out of range of the queen, quickly recovers an easy mastery of his peers. Even at the meeting with Caesar and Lepidus, when he holds all the worst cards, Caesar's priggery and the wiles of Lepidus stand no chance against his smiling confidence. This is an attractive Antony, full of fire and humour, and without doubt a natural leader; as a lover he may lay on his ecstasies a little thickly, but it remains a good performance.

Margaret Whiting's Cleopatra is a brave shot, but less successful; a woman plausibly in love, but a minor Marguerite Gauthier rather than a queen forgetting herself. Leon Gluckman puts something unusually formidable into Caesar, Derek Godfrey begins very well as Enobarbus and later seems to lose him, and Rosemary Webster gives Charmian a nice touch of irony.

Mr. Helpmann's production is laudably straightforward and vigorous, and Loudon Sainthill, who has usefully arranged a packet of Cleopatra's needles as his set, dresses with style a company whose speech has noticeably improved.

A Hatful of Rain, by Michael V. Gazzo, is the newest instalment of the American drama of incoherence, in which strong men struggle to express their deepest yearnings, and only get muscular cramp in doing so. Its subject is dope, though this doesn't come fully into the open until late in the play. In the meantime we deal circuitously with the wreck of a young addict's marriage; with his relations with his brother, a good-hearted oaf who is giving him money out of pity and trying hard not to make love to the boy's unhappy wife; with their joint relations with their blustering father; and with a shadowy gang of drug-peddlers who menace their flat. Explored at great leisure, these subjects



Armand Duval—BERNARD NOËL

Marguerite Gautier—EDWIGE FEUILLÈRE

[*La Dame Aux Camélias*

take a very long time to find a common focus, because although her husband is a nervous wreck and apt to be out all night, the play is nearly over before the wife discovers the reason.

As drama, on the edge of melodrama, it has a certain tension, which could be tightened considerably if it were cut by at least half an hour and speeded up. Its faults are underlined by the slowness of Sam Wanamaker's production, quite fatal to the impact of the gangsters, who are intended to be sinister but move and speak as if they were frost-bitten insects. That the piece was received with rapture by the first-night audience seemed to be due mainly to the acting. The four chief characters are taken well, and in the case of the brother, played by Mr. Wanamaker, very well. Bonar Colleano, Sally Ann Howes and George Coulouris stand up creditably to slow motion. Miss Howes, greatly improved, must do some more straight parts. Is it cynical to wish that American stage fathers and sons could love each other without indulging in such orgies of bumbling and fumbling?

* * * * *

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Under Milk Wood (New—29/8/56), a rich slice of Dylan Thomas. *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Phoenix—5/12/56), beautifully staged. And for a lighter evening, *Plaintiff in a Pretty Hat* (St. Martin's—24/10/56).

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Brothers in Law
The Barretts of Wimpole Street

THE adventures and misadventures of an innocent as he learns the ropes in some unfamiliar environment have always been a favourite formula for comedy. *Brothers in Law* (Director: Roy Boulting) is advertised in a way designed to emphasize the fact that it is in this tradition: we are seeing the same "team" as we saw in *Private's Progress*, but this time the innocent, Ian Carmichael, is a fledgling barrister instead of a fledgling soldier. My memory of the details of *Private's Progress* is not very good, but one difference I'm sure is that this has to rely far more than the earlier film did on tiny, amusing but quite disconnected character-sketches. There is never a dull moment, but the developing story line is not strong.

Perhaps misguidedly, they try to enrich the texture of the piece by introducing moments of mere slapstick, and familiar old comic situations that really have no more to do with a story about the legal world than with any other kind of story. Thus we get the golf joke (angering important partner by incompetence and bad luck), and the cooking joke (the flaming frying-pan), and even the fuse-changing joke (*bang!* and out go all the lights), as well as quite a bit of



[*Brothers in Law*]

Marshall—RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH Alfie Green—TERRY-THOMAS
Thursby—IAN CARMICHAEL Grimes, Q.C.—MILES MALLESON
Alec—ERIC BARKER

simple falling-over and so forth. The difficulty is of course that a story about the law is bound to depend a great deal on purely verbal effects, and the balance must somehow be adjusted.

I don't know the original book by Henry Cecil, but it is character and variety of character that make the strength of the picture. The cast list has over forty names, and nearly every one recalls an amusing moment. Mr. Carmichael is excellent as the central figure, gradually gaining confidence through all the difficulties and accidents of a young lawyer's career: essentially he is a man to whom things happen, but that is by no means so simple a part as it sounds to play well. Richard Attenborough as the colleague with whom he shares rooms—and chambers—is rather shadowy as a personage, not much has been written in to his character. The people who appear for a brief scene or two, in court, on the bench, or in the witness-box (Irene Handl has a wonderful spot as a witness who says nothing at all with immense significance), or in the dock (Terry-Thomas as a spiv, able to give his young counsel guidance because he has been there so often before)—these are the people who carry the whole affair and make it memorable.

In the latest version of Rudolf Besier's play *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (Director: Sidney Franklin), Cinema-Scope is a doubtful advantage, but the colour system, Metrocolor, is a quite positive one. The subdued (and predominantly plum) colours of the Victorian drawing-room play quite a valuable

part in producing the oppressive, closed-in atmosphere from which the breezy Browning rescues the ailing Elizabeth. Of course the main interest of this piece must always depend on the acting of the dominating dramatic figure, Edward Moulton-Barrett himself, down to the climactic scene in which he horrifies the girl by revealing that his love for her is very much more than paternal, and John Gielgud I think is remarkably impressive throughout. The large family (six brothers, two sisters of Elizabeth) have most of them not much chance to make an individual mark, but Virginia McKenna has some charming and touching scenes as the unlucky Henrietta.

Rather too much is made, I would suggest, of Flush, Elizabeth's spaniel. It is always a safe bet that an audience—particularly an English audience—will laugh at the sight of a dog apparently showing the same emotions of suspicion and disapproval as the more sympathetic human characters show; but in this kind of story that is hardly the kind of laugh that is wanted.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Van Gogh story *Lust for Life* is in London at last; review next week. *La Traversée de Paris* (27/2/57), *Anastasia* (6/3/57), *War and Peace* (28/11/56) and *The Rainmaker* (20/2/57) continue.

Several interesting new releases: Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (6/3/57), the brilliant documentary *The Silent World* (12/12/56), *Oklahoma!* (19/9/56) and *The Girl Can't Help It* (13/2/57).

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Scrapbooks
and Comics

ASSOCIATED-REDIFFUSION'S new panel game "Answers Please!" is the most promising adventure in screened guesswork I have come across. Its formula is simple: clips from old films and newsreels are shown to viewers and assembled panels of teenagers, and we are all invited to answer simple questions of identification. When did this happen? Where? Why? Provided that the film is of reasonable quality and the subject matter worth remembering the programme can hardly fail. There is nothing much more interesting than a session of pictorially-prompted recollection in tranquillity.

Steam radio's "Scrapbook" programmes have had a wonderful run and are still deservedly popular, but how much more rewarding they would be in vision. In his "Puzzle Corner" Ronnie Waldman used the idea very successfully as a background to a musical "Which Year?" quiz, and ever since I have been hoping that it would be developed and expanded. There must be enough film in the archives to make thirty or forty moving scrapbook programmes.

B.B.C. television "What's in the Picture?" failed because it used still photographs instead of movies. "Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?" fails—more often than not—because it remains tied to the studio and the static minutiae of the Old Curiosity Shop. It is about time that the quiz experts of the Television Centre devised a programme free from the claustrophobic stuffiness of the parlour and the posed immobility of the family photograph album.



Puzzle Corner

FRED EMNEY BILL MAYNARD BOB MONKHOUSE
DENNIS GOODWIN

Meanwhile we must be grateful for "Answers Please!" which is produced by Ray Dicks and introduced most efficiently and engagingly by Kent Walton. There is plenty of room for improvement. I can see no reason for squeezing in a studio panel between the film and the viewers, and the framing of both the questions and the official answers needs, as the form mistress says, more care and attention. But I would rather look at Bernard Shaw, David Sheppard, Vesuvius and space rockets any day than at the mucilaginous grins of the "What's My Line?" brigade.

The more I see of our home-grown comics the less hostile I feel towards imported situation comedy shows. In recent weeks the B.B.C. has ladled out large helpings of "My Pal Bob," "Mostly Maynard" and "The Fred Emney Show," and it is hard to imagine a regimen more tasteless, dreary and devoid of nourishment. The Monkhouse-Goodwin

line in laughter is precocious and leering, the kind of thing that one associates with maladjusted adolescence. Monkhouse is a reasonably versatile and ebullient bit-player and with better material, much better material, he could develop into a competent clown, but Goodwin seems singularly unhappy in front of the cameras.

These young men have won a high reputation as writers of comic scripts, and it is a pity that they are not content to exploit their more reliable talent. They are in real danger I think, of falling between two stools.

Maynard, now severed from his partner Scott, is another disappointment. There was a time when I predicted a very bright future for this likeable, casual performer, but the well of inspiration seems to be running dry. His latest efforts have been only faintly risible.

As for Fred Emney, I can merely say that his dead-pan, gag-book jests, double-take mime and endless variations on the comedy of corpulence are not enough to sustain a series of programmes. His gallumphing buffoonery would be acceptable in small doses, but it is difficult anyhow to think of Emney in small doses.

By contrast the synthetic witticism of George Burns and the polished clichés of poker-faced Jack Benny seem decidedly funny.

I have to agree with the perspicacious Peter Black that Stephen Grenfell's documentary on the rehabilitation of the newly blind, "The Barrier," was dangerously weakened by the B.B.C.'s predilection for linking moral fortitude and leadership exclusively with upper middle-class accents and mores.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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